**Contact: Chelsie Jeppson,** [**cjeppson@auvsi.org**](mailto:cjeppson@auvsi.org)

**Press Release**

**17 April 2024**

**Thief River Falls, Minnesota** – Today, the National Center for Autonomous Technologies (NCAT) is pleased to announce their upcoming certification as an official Training Partner for AUVSI’s Trusted Operator Program, a pioneering initiative aimed at establishing a standard of excellence for drone pilot training.

As the demand for drone services continues to rise across various industries, ensuring the highest level of safety, professionalism, and competency among drone pilots is paramount. The Trusted Operator Program, developed in collaboration with leading industry experts and regulatory specialists, addresses this need by setting rigorous standards for drone pilot training.

NCAT's certification under the Trusted Operator Program signifies its commitment to upholding the highest industry standards in drone pilot training. Through comprehensive curriculum, hands-on instruction, and adherence to best practices, NCAT ensures that its students are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and proficiency needed to operate drones safely and effectively in various environments.

The Trusted Operator Program certification underscores NCAT's commitment to quality, safety, and professionalism in drone operations. As an authorized training provider under the program, NCAT is positioned to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of the drone industry by producing highly skilled and responsible drone pilots.

For more information about NCAT and its Trusted Operator Program Certification, please visit ncatech.org.

**About National Center for Autonomous Technologies**

The National Center for Autonomous Technologies (NCAT), headquartered at Northland Community and Technical College, assists two-year and high school educators in integrating autonomous technology education into their classrooms. NCAT provides educational support/resources and workforce pathways for autonomous technology (AT), particularly in underserved areas to advance social and economic mobility.

For media inquiries, please contact:  
Stephanie Rispa

Equity & Inclusion Communications Director

National Center for Autonomous Technologies

Northland Community & Technical College

13892 Airport Drive

Thief River Falls, MN 56701

[stephanie.rispa@northlandcollege.edu](mailto:stephanie.rispa@northlandcollege.edu) (218) 683-8841

**About the Trusted Operator Program**

The AUVSI Trusted Operator ProgramTM (TOP) is a certification program that was developed with industry consensus and support. TOP has gained official recognition by the FAA (FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018, Section 631, Collegiate Training Programs), and international organizations such as ICAO, JARUS etc. as a safety and training framework that supports operations in addition to the basic FAA regulations (FAR Part 107).

The Trusted Operator Program fills the gap between minimally prescriptive operating regulations and the need for a uniform level of knowledge, flight proficiency, training, safety and risk management practices. The certification provides a common framework to support and verify a UAS operator’s safety, competence and reliability, and enables a level of assurance to customers, employers and other beneficiaries of UAS services.

The Trusted Operator Program references over 300 accredited and recognized industry standards and best practices including; ISO, ASTM, ANSI, NIMS, NFPA, OSHA, RTCA, ICAO, IEEE and more, and delivers clarity and a method of compliance to safety and best practice. This verification in pilot competency, and an organization’s capacity and commitment for formal safety frameworks, offers end users the **assurance of safety, competence, and reliability.** This is the heart of the Trusted Operator Program value proposition.

**About AUVSI**

The Association for Uncrewed Vehicle Systems International (AUVSI) — the world's largest non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of uncrewed systems and robotics — represents corporations and professionals from more than 60 countries involved in industry, government, and academia. AUVSI members work in the defense, civil and commercial markets. For more information, visit AUVSI.org